



Urban League of
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*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

January 7, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: GN Docket No. 09-191

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

The Urban League of the Upstate is more than just a civil rights organization; it is a movement of citizens, of all races and persuasions, dedicated to empowering people and changing lives. Our mission is to enable African-Americans and others in need to attain economic self-sufficiency through our advocacy, collaboration and targeted services focused on education, job training and employment.

Broadband Internet access is a powerful tool for delivering educational, economic, healthcare, civic engagement and civil rights opportunities to our members, which is why I continue to have serious reservations about the FCC's Open Internet Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).

We strongly support the Administration's goal of ensuring that all Americans have access to high-speed Internet service and appreciate the work which the FCC has already done to this end. But we are not convinced that imposing new regulations on an industry that has the potential to connect all Americans to a level playing field for economic opportunity, education and discourse is currently warranted.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life project, broadband adoption among African Americans increased only three percent from 2008-2009. Their newest report, issued January 5, 2010, found that while 63% of white Americans have a home broadband connection, only 44% of African Americans do. There is a serious digital divide for African Americans, other minority groups and rural Americans, and we hope to see greater strides made in promoting deployment and adoption in these unserved and underserved communities. The very communities which today may lag behind stand to gain the most from broadband and all its potential.

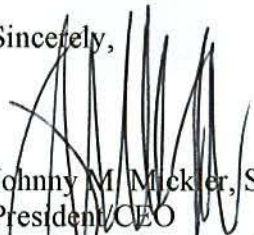
Additional private investment is essential to close this digital divide, which threatens to widen with each technological advance or new application.

New regulations which could discourage private sector investment could have the sad effect of widening the gap and preventing millions of Americans from gaining access to broadband.

It is crucial that consumers have access to low cost broadband services and the current climate of competition, investment and growth seems best suited to promoting this.

We appreciate the Commission's commitment to opening doors of equality and opportunity for all citizens and hope you will concentrate your work on promoting broadband access and adoption for all, rather than on imposing new regulations likely to be counterproductive.

Sincerely,



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